

Space and exploration studies in full swing at University of Houston-Clear Lake

Does exploration send your imagination soaring? The new space and exploration concentration in the University of Houston-Clear Lake's master of arts in humanities program begins its second semester in spring 2001. Emphasizing the historical, philosophical and global meaning of the space pioneers' achievement, this concentration studies exploration from a multidisciplinary perspective.

"Our Futures in Space," the second course in the new concentration, will be offered Wednesday evenings during the spring semester, by futurist Peter Bishop, associate professor in UHCL's School of Human Sciences and Humanities. The seminar will consider topics such as the rationale for space exploration, NASA's approach to space, missions to Mars, colonization of the solar system and the politics of reusable launch vehicles. Course books will include McCurdy's "Inside NASA," Wachhorst's "The Dream of Spaceflight," Lewis's "Mining the Sky," and Harrison's "After Contact."

"As human beings establish what may be their first permanent presence in space, 2001 will be a perfect time to look ahead to see what's in store for us there," says Bishop about his new course.

The idea for the space and exploration concentration originated with Clay Morgan, husband of Astronaut Barbara Morgan and a member of the advisory board of the UHCL Humanities program. Clay Morgan, who is currently writing

"The Illustrated History of the Shuttle-Mir," foresaw not only interest in the concentration among NASA personnel, but also a need for such a concentration. "With the International Space Station, the space business has gotten much broader, and it requires a broader background from people who are interested in it," he says. "UHCL's new concentration puts space and exploration where it belongs—as part of the whole history and texture of humankind's search for understanding."

Current space and exploration concentration students include employees from NASA and NASA's contractors. NASA configuration management specialist Kathleen Kaminski, a student in the concentration, says she took pleasure in exchanging ideas with students from many different fields.

"I enjoy the interaction between the students. We come from a variety of backgrounds—from engineers to history majors," says Kaminski. "There's more to space and exploration than just engineering."

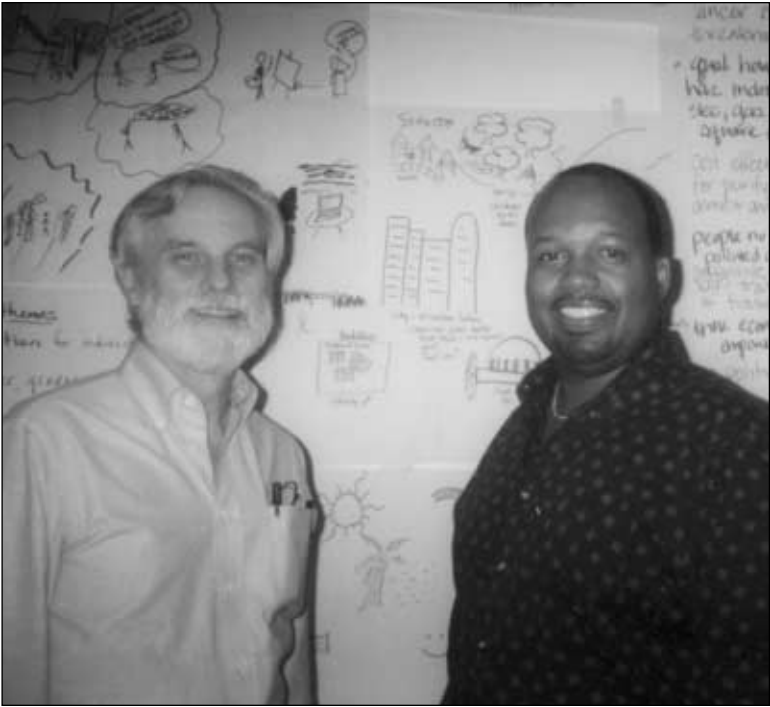
Greg Johnson, also a student at UHCL, concurs. Johnson, a space station software test engineer who works with Boeing as a contractor for NASA, says he is interested in the concentration because he wanted to know "how we arrived where we are." "If I knew that better, I could dream up better ideas for work. When I speculate about future horizons, I can

allude to past ideas." Johnson adds, "Out of all the people who work in white-collar professions, engineering students have the least exposure to the humanities. I've always been interested in space exploration—its past history and motivation. Now I can learn what I've missed."

Both Kaminski and Johnson are taking a seminar in "The History of Exploration."

The application requirement for the space and exploration concentration is a bachelor's degree in any field from an accredited institution. Classes are scheduled primarily in the evening to meet the needs of adult students, and all classes are given at the UHCL campus. Additional spring courses of interest to Space and Exploration Studies students include "Cultures of Asia," anthropology; "World Futures," futures; and "Cross-cultural Communications," psychology. ■

For information about the space and exploration concentration and enrollment, contact Dr. Gretchen Mieszkowski, director of humanities, mieszkowski@cl.uh.edu, 281-283-3312; or Ann Hinojosa, advising coordinator, hinojosa@cl.uh.edu, 281-283-3333.



University of Houston-Clear Lake added a space and exploration concentration to its master of arts in humanities program last fall. "Our Futures in Space," the second course in the new concentration, will be offered during the spring semester. Pictured are futurist Peter Bishop, left, associate professor in UHCL's School of Human Sciences and Humanities, and humanities student Greg Johnson.

Sweet sounds of success

Doug Ardoin gave up a life pursuing fame and fortune as a guitarist to join the space program at JSC. Now, with an established career at NASA, he returns to the music he left behind.

Noted for his role as technical manager for the Space Shuttle Systems Integration Office, Ardoin is responsible for coordination of all on-orbit configuration and analysis requirement teams for joint mission operations between the space shuttle and International Space Station. But he is less known for his musical endeavors. Ardoin was inducted into a second hall of fame, the Museum of the Gulf Coast Music Hall of Fame, Jan. 20, "in recognition of personal contributions to the musical heritage of the Gulf Coast region, the United States and the world." He had been inducted into the Louisiana Hall of Fame in Lafayette in 1994.

Ardoin was given these honors as credit for starting the Fabulous Boogie Kings, a band that eventually toured the

country, playing venues in California, New York and Las Vegas. The band had a unique sound for its time. Described as "blue-eyed soul," the Boogie Kings were

He applied to NASA and was offered a job. Then, after a car accident postponed graduation and NASA employment, Ardoin found no positions were open. He worked and played with a band in New Orleans for a few years, then got hired at JSC in 1967 to do Lunar Module landing dynamics. For about twenty years, Ardoin did not play a note. "I love music so much," says Ardoin, "I

transferred. His current job is his favorite. He especially enjoys his work on the Joint On-orbit Verification Review Board because of the work he does in preparation for flights.

Ardoin is respected and admired by his peers. Co-worker Lambert Austin says, "He is a dedicated NASA employee and is well respected by his peers for his technical capability and his effective management style." Another co-worker, Don Noah, says, "He's at work by 6:30 every morning and is always cheerful and upbeat. He's a self-starter and good project manager."

"He's also a great family man with a lovely wife, Carol, and five great kids whom he and his wife raised with excellent character and education as well," says David Hamilton of Ardoin's children, a medical doctor, two lawyers and two dental hygienists. Ardoin's talent was passed along to his children. Three of them also play guitar, one has his own band, and one even sat in for his dad's bass player a couple of times.

Ardoin now plays with Louisiana Boogie, a band he formed with friends in November 1999. They play in the Clear Lake area and some shows in Louisiana. Austin says, "like most JSC employees, Doug is very conscientious about not allowing outside endeavors to interfere with his work responsibilities."

When asked why he hasn't retired yet, Ardoin answers, "It's a fun job. If it weren't fun, I'd retire. I enjoy coming to work every day. It's the best of both worlds. I get to be a rocket scientist one day and a musician the next!" ■

Louisiana Boogie, Ardoin's current band, can be found at <http://www.orbitworld.net/dougardoin/louisianaboogie>.



Doug Ardoin, technical manager, front row, second from the left, with his band, Louisiana Boogie.

known for a mix of R&B, Blues and Swamp Pop. Ardoin began in 1955, learning to play instruments in his outdoor kitchen. He stuck with the guitar, added members, and the Boogie Kings were soon playing six nights a week. Performing only on weekends during school, the Boogie Kings were doing well enough to be Ardoin's primary income during his pre-med studies at Louisiana State University.

In spite of his love for music, Ardoin knew that life as a professional musician was not a family man's career. He had switched to the University of Southwestern Louisiana to study physics, and told the band of his intentions to quit after graduation.

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– Doug Ardoin

did not want to be tempted." So, he put his music up in 1967, when he arrived here. "Out of sight, out of mind" was his philosophy.

Over the years, Ardoin has held many titles here at JSC. He even turned down an opportunity to work at KSC, when the Operations and Maintenance Requirements and Specifications Board he was involved with was being